

UN-OCHA, “Humanitarian Needs Overview: Nigeria”, February 2023, Pg. 17

predominantly women and children, but they also include a small number of surrendered fighters. The Government of Nigeria continues its efforts to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate ex-fighters identified as low risk under “Operation Safe Corridor” as well as under a joint scheme between the Federal Government and the BSG, often referred to as the ‘Borno model’.

It is uncertain what the impact of the upcoming general elections will be on the humanitarian operation. Elections for the Presidency, Federal and State legislators and governors are scheduled for February and March 2023. A change in Federal or State governments could lead to policy changes and possibly impact on the operating environment. In recent elections, there has not been significant electoral violence in the BAY states. That said, there is a possibility that NSAGs will use this opportunity to destabilize the political system.

Sociocultural

Nigeria is the seventh most populated country in the world and one of the fastest growing countries globally, with a growth rate of 3.2 per cent.¹³ The rapid growth rate means that the country has a very young population: 43 per cent of Nigerians are 0-14 years old.¹⁴ The fertility rate in Nigeria – the average number of children a woman is estimated to bear – is 5.3. This increases to 6.1 in the north.¹⁵ Life expectancy is one of the lowest in the world¹⁶ at 55 for men and 57 for women.

Data published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in September 2022, estimates that 19.7 million children in Nigeria between the ages of 6 and 18 are out of school. Nigeria has the third largest out-of-school population after India (61 million) and Pakistan (20.7 million). **Out-of-school rates among adolescents and youth have increased by 61 per cent in the last 20 years, from 6.3 million to 10.1 million. Rates among primary school-age children have increased by 50 per cent over the same period, from 6.4 to 9.7 million.**¹⁷

While population growth can spur economic growth, there is a danger in Nigeria that the speed of

population growth will diminish per capita access to education, health care and other basic services critical to the welfare and economic opportunities of young Nigerians. Likewise, in a largely agrarian economy such as the north-east, rapid population growth, combined with climate change, could reduce the amount of arable land available for cultivation per capita, further challenging food security in areas that are already food insecure.

Economy

As of September 2022, inflation rates stood at 21 per cent – 23 per cent for food prices – up by around 4 per cent from last year.¹⁸

According to the latest figures from the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the unemployment rate stands at 33 per cent, with youth unemployment at 42 per cent.¹⁹ Nearly 83 million Nigerians, 40 per cent of the total population, live below the national poverty line, living on less than one dollar a day. While the economy is projected to grow at an average of 2.9 per cent in 2023, a decline in oil production, heightened insecurity and the heavy flooding in 2022 could see the number of people below the poverty line rise further. According to the World Bank, an additional 5 million Nigerians have been pushed into poverty in 2022 alone.²⁰

Multidimensional poverty, an index that measures the percentage of households in a country deprived along three dimensions of well-being (monetary poverty, education and basic infrastructure services) show that 63 per cent of Nigerians are multidimensionally poor (roughly 130 million people), with the highest number of poor people located in the north and in rural areas.

In rural areas of the north-east, agriculture remains the largest source of income and livelihoods.²¹ In the BAY states, between 65 and 80 per cent of people work in agriculture, a sector that accounts for more than half of the regional GsDP and one which has been severely impacted by the conflict. Forced to leave their homes in search of safety, farmers have sought refuge in garrison towns, severely curtailing their agriculture and livelihood options.²² Over the past three years,